

A new village in Dantumadeel?

Bert Kisjes

In the Netherlands there are plans to build new villages. To meet housing demands more and more houses are needed. Where should you put these houses?

Most houses, during the last century, were built in the cities. This made cities grow rapidly. Many people had to live there because that was where the factories were built. A relatively small village could, in this way, grow into a large city. Eindhoven may be one of the clearest examples. The city that grew with Philips's success.

During the last few years people are starting to think differently. Certain groups indicate that they prefer not to live in the cities. These are mainly old people and families with small children. People still mainly work in the cities.

But with increasing modes of transportation and increased acceptance of a separation of working and living this has become possible: living some distance from the place you work. The solution that was found were neighbourhoods of houses in the smaller cities. These came to be called 'vinox-neighbourhoods'. They exist in Zoetermeer, Purmerend, Hoorn and many other places in the Netherlands. However, few people are enthusiastic about these. They are certainly not the fruits of a prosperous time that the people in construction owe to the

standard of living of these times. Especially the people in construction are often ashamed of this way of building.

From that flowed the idea to use a type of agriculture that needs less acres, to build new villages on the newly available space. Because villages are 'in' as places to live.

'Innonet', a cooperation between the Ministries of Agriculture and of Spatial Development, have started working on this idea. First they contacted city planners, next they sought out agricultural architects. They realised that a village is more than just landscape and architecture. It is also a collection of people with a social structure. This led them to Cultural Village. They asked people to write down their ideas about villages. Together with Carin Giesen I started this task. Carin Giesen has an independent psychological research bureau 'Aiolos'. She has written a dissertation which is a study of the life of farmers, which has been published under the name 'Crisis op de boerderij' (Crisis on the farm)¹. Together we wrote an essay entitled 'New villages, a first look at their social vitality.'²

In the mean time the aldermen and mayor of Dantumadeel, Frisia, have decided that they would like to be guinea pigs for the experiment. Somewhere on the community lands a new

village could be 'built' (?) or 'founded' (?). The villagers will be consulted this October. In November the experts will look at the case.

For years city planners and landscape architects have looked at rural areas with interest. They see a lot of work there. They would like to start shovelling because that will bring them honour. Cultural Village looks at this interest critically. Because the birth of Cultural Village was preceded by a battle with planologists who wanted to start construction on various things in the sea west of the village Wijk aan Zee³.

We would like to follow these developments from up close, especially if we are wanted. That is one thing we gained. We hope to continue working on the Charter of the Villages in this way.

¹ ISBN 90 229 8134 7

² On the internet the text is available at www.agro.nl/innovatienetwerk. English and German versions can be found at the website van Cultural Village. www.cultural-village.com

³ See 'Vuist aan zee', the story of a village that has escaped the plans of planologists for 21 years. ISBN 90 803410-2-9

Visit to Kilingi Nõmme

Bert Kisjes

For the festivities on the longest day (the 23rd of June) I visited Kilingi Nõmme. It was my second visit. Kilingi Nõmme has an organisation of Cultural Village which is independent of the village council. Everyone is talking about the Estonian admission to the EU in 2004. To the people I talked to it is a leap in the dark.

Despite the low standard of living (according to West-European standards) I have not heard about people who succumb to their debts and end up without a roof over their heads. Who does not mortgage their house cannot be evicted. And the gas bill in winter does not cause problems, either. I saw large piles of firewood next to every house. Kilingi Nõmme lies amidst forests. The Cultural-Village Committee has started preparing 2005, when Kilingi will be Cultural Village of Europe.



The work of Robert Olo, the Estonian participant in the symposium for woodcutters in Bystré.

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The message of Cultural Village needs to be spread

Jacky de Vries

One of the most important tasks that Cultural Village now has is to spread her message and her experiences. To other villages, science, governments and the media. This is no easy task. The recently published book *Vital Villages* will aid this process.

The developments within the covenant of villages are rapid. Carefully, science is acknowledging the message. And there is the Charter, which will have its own seat at Svojanov. The developments are so rapid that the book *Vital Villages*, to the insider, was outdated when it was published.

Nonetheless the book has an important task. It tells the history of the birth of the covenant and its findings. In such a way that an outsider can find out what started in Tommerup in 1996.

Now the time has come to communicate the experiences and philosophy to others. The

twelve villages of the covenant have demonstrated that the village has an enormous life force. They had it, and they can keep it, despite globalisation.

The 21st century will be the century of regions, this has been said and I agree. What has been done within Cultural Village, has enough strength to give confidence to other villagers in the vitality of their surroundings. It has enough strength to convince governments and the media that there are villages as well, not just cities. But this requires the message to be spread.

As professor Cheli of the university of Sienna said in 2002: „Many communities will be interested in this covenant. Cultural Village is now a four-year-old child that is growing up. We should realise that the child can really grow up. Your ideas are the future, not just for Europe, but for the entire planet.”

As an author of the book I know, as no other, how important such a quote can be in spreading

het message. Before I started writing *Vital Villages* I only knew superficial thing about Cultural Village. As a journalist working with the Noordhollands Dagblad I followed the actions of the people of Wijk aan Zee from a distance. But I did not realise the true meaning yet.

That only happened during the talks with Bert Kisjes about the book that was to be written. The ironic thing is that, months after I finished the book, I encountered the same kind of disinterest or ignorance. When I went to the editors of a newspaper or magazine to communicate the enthusiasm for Cultural Village, it was difficult to get them to understand that there was more to it than regular city twinning.

Cultural Village has to grow. Besides this covenant of twelve, new ties must be created. The book is a first step to explain to people what historic developments occurred in 1999 and after.

Vital Villages

In 2003 the book *Vital Villages* was published. It is the story of the Dutch journalist Jacky de Vries about Cultural Village of Europe. How the idea was born in the important year 1989 and grew in both Tommerup and Wijk aan Zee. The book was published in four languages: English/German and Italian/Dutch. Besides the story of Cultural Village it also contains short portraits of the twelve villages involved, the text of the Charter of the Villages and the philosophy behind it. And many illustrations to clarify the story.

How can you get a copy?

It is available at the Beverwijkse boekhandel, Stumpel in Heemskerk, Ed van de Watering in Wijk aan Zee or at the secretariat at Julianaweg 35 1949 AN Wijk aan Zee.

Or you could deposit € 23,- (includes shipping) to account nr. 3080.13.743 of Cultural Village mentioning 'Vital Villages'.

Europe

The EU has paid some attention to the publishing of the book. At the presentation in Aldeburgh a Member of European parliament was present. In Wijk aan Zee Max van den Berg (Social Democrat) and Pronk (Christian Democrat) were present and in Schachdorf Ströbeck Christian Democrat Horst Schnellhardt dropped by. But on the other hand the European Commission declined to give support.

We wanted to organize a meeting at the castle Svojanov, meant for villages that wanted and could profit from our experiences. Especially in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia there is keen interest for this.

Our requests to Brussels time and again hit upon the sectoral way of working there, so an initiative with an integral approach is not honoured. Moreover, the various programmes expect an amount of organization that would be unhealthy in a village. We keep finding out that the Europe of Brussels and the Europe of the Villages are two very different worlds.

Cor Hienkens, alderman of Beverwijk who accompanied the Wijk aan Zee delegation to the village festival on September 21st in Aldeburgh, has offered all the villages two copies of a new map of Europe, the 'Europe of the villages'. The map is supposed to end up in the schools of the villages involved.



Member of European Parliament Max van den Berg (Social democrat) speaking during the presentation of the book *Vital Villages* in Wijk aan Zee.

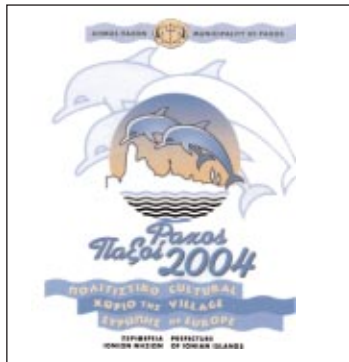
Paxos 2004

Paxos has had a good start of 'it's' year. The small island near Gaios is getting a facelift. The ministers of agriculture have visited the island in April. President Konstantinos Stefanopoulos came in may and is planning to be at the opening conference in April. He has become a patron of Cultural Village. The conference on 16-19th of april will be dedicated to the theme 'water'. A real problem on the island, because it does not have wells and is completely dependent on rainfall.



In the middle: Konstantinos Stefanopoulos during his visit to Paxos.

On six different weekends in 2004 the twelve villages will visit Paxos in pairs. The youth camp is planned on 10-20th of July and the autumn meeting on 5-8th of November. The dolphins of Paxos' coat of arms have jumped into the logo of Cultural Village. In 2004 the Olympics will also be held in Greece.



The logo that Paxos will use next year.



The wine feast of Palkonya on Whit Monday became an international meeting. Guests from Wijk aan Zee and Mellionec came to Palkonya to taste the new wine harvest.

CULTURAL VILLAGE of EUROPE

Colophon:

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Short notices

Opening conference Aldeburgh

At the opening conference in Aldeburgh, on the 26th of april, the Austrian village Kirchheim im Innkreis was the twelfth village to join the network of Cultural Villages. Kirchheim lies along the old Roman road from Rome to Passau, between Ried and Braunau. It is an autonomous, active and mainly agricultural community with 1500 inhabitants. The Musikkapelle performed in Pergine Valdarno in 2002. In 2010, when Kirchheim will celebrate its 900th birthday it will become Cultural Village of Europe.

Wood workers

This fish was made by a craftsman from Estonia during a workshop for wood workers in Bystré. Estonia has a lot of forests. Because of the international network of Cultural Village, people from Estonia and Holland participated in the workshop.

News from Palkonya

On may 1st a fish soup competition was held in Palkonya. Eight men and one woman participated. The fish came from the lakes near Palkonya. It was the first time that the contest was held outside. The only female participant, Marika Frech, won the prize. The day was concluded with a ball.



Fish soup competition in Palkonya.

Trpin

In 2001, when Bystré was Cultural Village of Europe, the Palkonya delegation stayed in Trpin. The next year Trpin visited Palkonya. In the weekend of may 30th and the 1st of June a delegation of 36 people from Palkonya visited Trpin again. The relations between the two villages are very cordial.

A trip along the European villages

On the 10th of august Gijs Molenaar left Beverwijk to travel along the 12 villages of Cultural Village of Europe. The first stop was Tommerup. Then he continued to Kilingi Nõmme. By now he has reached Austrian Kircheim, having passed Bystré on the way.

Gijs writes a report on his website www.molenaar.nu. He intends to spend two weeks in every village. From Kirchheim he will continue to Palkonya, Paxos, Pergine Valdarno, Porrúa, Mellionec, Aldeburgh and Schachdorf Ströbeck.

Ezels en kwasten (Easels and brushes)

Painters from various villages participated in the annual painter's symposium Ezels en Kwasten in Wijk aan Zee. This may, painters came from Paxos, Brittany and Tommerup, among other places.

Night of Europe

In Wijk aan Zee a large feast on the village meadow is being prepared to celebrate the admission of the ten new members to the EU. The celebration will be held in the night of 12/13 june 2004. Wijk aan Zee has asked the communities Beverwijk and Heemskerk as well as steel mill Corus to participate. Existing relations in the ten new countries will be invited. Everyone is expected to bring their best music, theatre and dance. Tommerup gave the example in 1989. The village managed to react adequately to an important event in world history by organizing a visit to get acquainted with citizens from Eastern Europe.